

Sticking together: Explaining comparative centre-right party success in
post-communist Central and Eastern Europe

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explain varying patterns of centre-right success between 1990 and 2006 in three post-communist states, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. Success is understood as the ability to construct broad and durable parties. Both macro-institutional explanations, focusing on executive structures and electoral systems, and historical-structural explanations stressing communist regime legacies have limited power to explain the observed variance. The introduction of a more sophisticated framework of path dependence, stressing the role of choices and political crafting at critical junctures, adds some insight but the lack of strong ‘lock-in’ mechanisms required by such approaches makes such a model unconvincing when applied to CEE centre-right party development. Other explanations that stress the importance of elite characteristics and capacity are needed to supplement the shortcomings of these approaches, in particular: (a) the presence of cohesive elites able to act as the nucleus of new centre-right formations; and (b) the ability of such elites to craft broad integrative ideological narratives that can transcend diverse ideological positions and unite broad swathes of centre-right activists and voters.

Key words: centre-right, parties, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland

Despite their importance in contemporary European politics, parties of the centre-right remain a strikingly under-researched area of comparative European politics. This is particularly true for centre-right parties in the new democracies of Central and

Eastern Europe (CEE), about which there is little genuinely comparative research. Having conceptualized the CEE centre-right and tracked its development in parallel national cases in a previously published collection (Szczzerbiak and Hanley 2006), in this paper we consider in more directly comparative terms why some centre-right parties in this region have been more successful than others. We do so by comparing three CEE countries in the period 1990-2006 where the centre-right enjoyed contrasting fortunes: Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. We focus on these cases because, since the fall of communism in 1989, they have experienced clear and relatively well-established programmatic competition and offer a degree of variance. We define our dependent variable of centre-right 'success' in terms of centre-right formations' breadth and durability. We pay particular attention to three of the major centre-right formations in these countries in this period: Hungary's Fidesz, the Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) in Poland. In comparing these three cases, we seek not only to examine the comparative development of a hitherto neglected set of parties, but also to test and expand approaches to party development in CEE more generally.

The paper begins by explaining why we believe that broad and durable party formations are 'successful' outcomes. In section two, we operationalise party breadth and durability and rank Hungary and the Czech Republic as the more_successful cases and Poland as least successful. We then examine critically possible explanations for these patterns of variation in the existing literatures, specifically: (i) macro-institutional explanations that focus on executive structures and electoral systems; (ii) historical-structural ones that focus on regime legacies; and (iii) path dependent/critical juncture frameworks that focus on choices made in the course of transition politics. We then posit two supplementary explanations for centre-right

‘success’: (a) the presence of cohesive leadership elites able to act as the nucleus of new centre-right formations and (b) the ability of such elites to craft broad integrative narratives that can transcend diverse ideological positions and unite broad swathes of centre-right activists and voters. We conclude with a short discussion of the broader applicability of this framework and the implications of recent developments in Poland and other states in the region.

1. Why broad and durable party formations?

The concept of ‘party success’ is a problematic one. It is conventionally thought of as a combination of office-holding, political longevity, vote maximisation and the implementation of policy goals (Kitschelt 1989, 1994; Muller and Strom 1999). However, for the purposes of this paper we reject office-holding and policy- or performance-based measures of success. Policy outcomes are determined by a complex array of economic, political, social and institutional factors. As such they are too multi-form to link to incumbent parties. This is particularly true in post-communist CEE where policy has usually been made through inter-party coalition bargaining under sometimes powerful international and EU conditionalities. For similar reasons, we reject office-holding as a measure of party success. Not only is retention of office partly conditioned by policy performance and inter-party negotiation, but the relatively short period during which CEE party systems have existed makes it difficult to identify and aggregate out electoral cycles. Moreover, there has been a tendency among electorates in the region to reject incumbent parties of all political shades after one or two terms in office (Williams 2002; Tavits, 2008). This leaves measures based on electoral support. However, although not uninformative, measures of party success such as vote share or absolute numbers of

votes received are, in our view, too crude even if averaged across a decade and a half of party competition. As well as overlooking the possible impact of varying institutional arrangements, they ignore the different nature of a large, and perhaps transitory, centre-right vote fragmented between many parties and a concentrated and sustained centre-right vote. Raw measures of centre-right parliamentary representation, although again relevant, suffer from similar flaws. For the purposes of this paper we therefore choose a definition of party ‘success’ based on two elements: (a) ‘breadth’, by which we mean the ability to construct an inclusive electoral entity that encompasses a socially and ideologically broad range of voters and sub-groups; and (b) ‘durability’, which we take to mean the ability of such an entity to remain united and endure.

In our view organizational success is an important component shaping electoral success and we would argue that broad and durable party-type formations are more likely to be electorally successful. Larger parties have a clear advantage within majoritarian electoral systems, where both ‘psychological’ and ‘mechanical’ factors favour them (Duverger 1954: 216-228). However, even under the list-based systems of proportional representation that predominate in CEE, similar effects operate through, for example, registration requirements that favour larger parties; minimum thresholds for securing parliamentary representation; *de facto* thresholds caused by districting effects; commonly used formulae for translating votes into seats; and ‘top-up’ lists of reserved seats for parties securing a particular share of the vote. While a wider range of smaller parties might be able to target specific ideological or socio-economic segments more effectively, broad and inclusive formations reduce information costs for voters and, once formed, avoid or minimise transaction costs involved in negotiating and maintaining pre-electoral alliances and post-election

coalition agreements as they require fewer partners and can negotiate from a position of strength. Durable party formations avoid the repeated start-up costs associated with the programmatic and organizational development of new parties and are also more likely to attract talented elites interested in joining electorally successful, office-holding parties with long-term prospects.

2. Overview of cases

Although we believe meaningful definitions of the CEE centre-right can be formulated (Hanley 2004: 10-16), in this paper we identify right-wing and centre-right party formations inductively through a mix of factors: parties' self-identification, local understandings of 'rightness', established national patterns of coalition preference, and membership of transnational centre-right groupings such as the European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED). We then measure the breadth and durability of the main centre-right or right-wing formation in each of our countries. For all national parliamentary elections to lower houses since 1989 in which parties or well defined party blocs were the main actors,¹ we measure: (i) the proportion of the vote for centre-right and right-wing parties taken by the largest centre-right or right-wing grouping;² (ii) the share of the centre-right and right-wing vote won by the largest centre-right or right-wing party divided by the number of right-wing parliamentary parties (the centre-right aggregation index); (iii) the proportion of parliamentary seats won by the centre-right and right taken by the largest centre-right or right-wing grouping; and (iv) the level of fractionalization of centre-right and right-wing forces in parliament measured by the application of the Rae index to parties on the centre-right or right.³ In this paper the concept of breadth

and durability of centre-right party-type formations is thus determined with reference to a continuum, with a proto-typical broad, durable CEE centre-right party formation being one that has been able to secure 100% of the total centre-right and right-wing vote in every post-1989 election. Breadth and durability are thus conceptualized as: *the ability to garner a substantial proportion of the votes cast for all centre-right and right-wing party formations over a sustained period of time*. Although we see organizational factors as significant, this definition does not specify any optimal organizational form that a successful centre-right party need take.

Tables 1-3 about here

2.1 Hungary

Whilst the communist-successor Hungarian Socialist Party is clearly on and of the left, not all Hungarian parties with non-communist origins can be seen as on the right. This is because in Hungary left-right divisions based on regime and opposition are overlain by pre-communist understandings of left and right based primarily on attitudes towards the Hungarian nation. Thus although their origins were anti-communist, liberal parties in post-communist Hungary neither identified themselves as being on the right, nor formed governing coalitions with post-opposition parties that defined themselves as right-wing. Indeed, the main surviving liberal party, the Free Democrats, formed a coalition with the Socialists in 1994, 2002 and 2006.

In the first two post-communist elections, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was the largest centre-right party but was only moderately successful in terms of breadth, garnering 58% of the total centre-right and right-wing vote in 1990 and 32%

in 1994. From the mid-1990s, it was eclipsed by Fidesz which, as **Table 1** shows, became the most successful Hungarian right-wing formation. When formed in 1988, Fidesz had defined itself as a youth-based liberal party and was initially a member of the Liberal International. However, by 2002 it had transformed itself into a centre-right, national-conservative party and become a member of the EPP (Fowler 2004).

Fidesz won the 1998 elections, having successfully united a range of right-wing forces at both mass and elite level (with the exception of some smaller far-right groupings such as the Justice and Life party), and entered government as the dominant partner in a centre-right coalition. Although it suffered narrow electoral defeats to the centre-left in 2002 and 2006, by 2002 Fidesz had become the party of choice for over 40% of Hungarian voters, and in the 2002 and 2006 elections it gained respectively 90% and 85% of the total votes won by centre-right and right-wing parties. The latter lower figure reflected the Hungarian Democratic Forum's failure to renew its electoral alliance with Fidesz in 2006. Fidesz remained united both in office and after electoral defeat in 2002 and 2006 (and even gained some renewed political impetus from these).

2.2 Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic there is a large, distinct group of centre-right parties, all closely integrated into mainstream European centre-right groupings. This includes: the Civic Democratic Party, the Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party, the Freedom Union-Democratic Union and between 1992 and 1998 the Civic Democratic Alliance.⁴ With the exception of the Christian and Democratic Union, which is similar to larger sister parties in Germany and Austria, all Czech centre-right

groupings are essentially economically liberal parties. Right-wing politics in the Czech Republic at both elite and mass level is therefore understood primarily in terms of (neo-)liberalism and anti-communism with far-right economic populist groups marginalized.

By far the most successful Czech centre-right party has been the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) founded in 1991 under the leadership of then Czechoslovak Finance Minister Václav Klaus, following the break-up of the broad Civic Forum movement which had piloted Czechoslovakia's transition from communism in 1989-90 (Hanley 2007). As **Table 2** shows, the Civic Democrats have secured 25-35% of the national vote in five free elections since 1992, on each occasion gaining at least 60% of the total vote for parties of the centre-right and right. They have also survived loss of national office and internal splits in 1997; a powerful electoral challenge from a new liberal-Christian Democratic bloc between 1999 and 2002; successive electoral defeats at the hands of the Czech Social Democrats in 1998 and 2002; and the departure of their charismatic founder Klaus as party leader in December 2002. The Civic Democrats won the 2006 parliamentary election, successfully concentrating the right-wing electorate to gain a record vote share of 35%.

However, as **Tables 1 and 2** illustrate, they have not been as successful as Hungary's Fidesz in terms of breadth, never having secured more than 79% of the votes cast for all centre-right and right-wing parties (in 2006) compared with Fidesz's 90% score in 2002; and they have lagged still more markedly behind Fidesz in their ability to concentrate the parliamentary right. The Civic Democrats' more limited electoral support and failure to incorporate other smaller liberal-conservative groups have always left them dependent on either ideologically uncommitted coalition allies - including, most recently, the Czech Greens - or deals with the centre-left. Despite its

impressive election victory in 2006, the party again struggled to find parliamentary allies capable of sustaining a majority centre-right coalition.

2.3 Poland

As **Table 3** shows, the centre-right's relative organisational success in Hungary and the Czech Republic contrasts starkly with the position in Poland, where throughout the period surveyed it was unable to construct an inclusive and durable party-type formation. In Poland the centre-right and right are defined as comprising parties that emerged from the Solidarity movement and anti-communist democratic opposition and that explicitly profiled themselves as conservative, Christian Democratic, clerical-nationalist or simply centre-right and right-wing. Polish liberal and agrarian parties are more difficult to categorise. Post-Solidarity liberal parties such as the Democratic Union, Liberal Democratic Congress and Freedom Union are categorised as being on the centre-right because in post-1989 Poland party origins have had a significant influence on whether parties are identified as right or left both by themselves and by voters. Moreover, post-Solidarity liberal parties only formed government coalitions with post-Solidarity centre-right and right-wing parties. For the same reason, the post-Solidarity agrarian parties, such as the Peasant Agreement, are also categorized as part of the right. Applying the same logic, the Polish Peasant Party is not included in the right. Despite its membership of the EPP, the Peasant Party was the direct organisational successor to the communist satellite United Peasant Party and before 2007 only been able to form government coalitions with the communist successor Democratic Left Alliance. Finally, the agrarian Self-Defence party, which some commentators categorise as a right-wing or radical right party (Minkenberg 2002:

351), was also excluded. While there were clearly nationalist-populist elements in Self-Defence's programme and discourse, the party's primary appeal was an economically populist one.

The first fully free Polish parliamentary election held in October 1991 produced an atomized parliament including a fragmented centre-right and right. As Table 1 shows, the largest centre-right party in the 1991 and 1993 elections, the liberal Democratic Union, won only 12.31% and 10.59% of the vote representing only 20% and 21% of the total centre-right and right-wing vote respectively. Following electoral defeats in the 1993 parliamentary and 1995 presidential elections, the Polish centre-right coalesced around Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), a broad trade union-based movement with a Catholic-conservative orientation (Szczerbiak 2004). Solidarity Electoral Action won the 1997 parliamentary election, securing 33.7% of the vote, representing 60% of the total centre-right and right-wing vote. However, the grouping went on to disintegrate, suffering a catastrophic defeat in the 2001 'earthquake' election when it did not even win enough votes to enter the new parliament. Instead, three new centre-right and right-wing parliamentary parties emerged: the liberal-conservative Civic Platform (PO), the national-social conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party, and the clerical-nationalist League of Polish Families (LPR). In the 2005 election, Law and Justice narrowly defeated Civic Platform and won 26.99% of the votes. Although an expanded centre-right and right-wing electorate was largely garnered by these two parties, the vote for Law and Justice still represented only a relatively modest 42% of the total vote cast for all centre-right and right-wing parties. In October 2007 early elections took place following the break-up of the Law and Justice-led government, which had excluded Civic Platform. In the elections both Law and Justice and Civic Platform gained significant additional vote share and

parliamentary representation: Law and Justice polled 32.11%, while Civic Platform emerged as the winner with 41.51% of the vote. Both centre-right parties drew support away from smaller groupings and benefited from the continued disarray of the post-communist centre-left following its implosion and loss of office in 2005 (Szczzerbiak 2005, 2007).

The 2007 elections may mark the beginning of a transition from the pattern of centre-right instability and fragmentation observed in Poland in much of the period discussed. Both Civic Platform and Law and Justice have now maintained themselves as large parties and retained a parliamentary and organisational existence longer than Solidarity Electoral Action.

However, it is too early fully to assess their repercussions and, despite impressive expansion of the centre-right electorate - from 38.75% in 2001 to 51.13% in 2005 and 78.92% in 2007 - neither Law and Justice nor Civic Platform proved able to concentrate the centre-right as Fidesz and, to a lesser extent, the Civic Democrats had done.⁵

3. The limits of previous approaches

For a number of reasons, widely used macro-institutional and historical-structural explanations of party development have limited power to explain the variance we observe across our three cases.

3.1 Macro-institutional approaches

Macro-institutional approaches to explaining the relative strength and durability of centre-right formations in post-communist CEE tend to focus on two variables: the electoral system, particularly its degree of proportionality; and the nature of executive structures, particularly the presence or absence of a strong presidency.

3.1.1 Electoral systems

Arguments that the ‘mechanical’ and ‘psychological’ effects of majoritarian and proportional electoral systems tend to produce two-party and multi-party systems respectively have a long lineage in political science (Duverger 1954: 216-228). In the context of our research more majoritarian electoral systems should produce stronger and more cohesive centre-right parties. However, close examination of our three CEE cases suggests problems with this argument at both the empirical and theoretical level.

Firstly, Hungary is the only one of the cases considered here that has a predominantly majoritarian rather than proportional electoral system. Given the relative consolidation and cohesion of Hungary’s centre-right, the nature of the country’s electoral system offers a superficially plausible explanatory account, particularly if Hungary is considered in a binary comparison with the Polish case. However, while less proportional than that of other CEE states, Hungary’s electoral system is a ‘mixed’ model with three interlinking majoritarian and proportional tiers which offer a complex mix of incentives and choices to both large and small parties seeking to formulate alliance building and campaigning strategies (Birch, Millard, Popescu and Williams 2002: 63-6). Moreover, far from shaping a party system forming *ex nihilo* in the early 1990s, the election system agreed by regime and opposition in 1989 in Hungary was shaped by well profiled emergent political parties that had existed under late communism, including both the Hungarian Democratic Forum and Fidesz.⁶

Moreover, while the Czech and Polish electoral systems differ in some respects, and both have undergone significant amendment over the last fifteen years, they are broadly similar in terms of their proportionality (Birch et al 2002: 41-5). Nevertheless, as **Tables 2 and 3** show, they have produced substantially different outcomes, with the Czech centre-right considerably more stable and consolidated than the Polish one. The Czech electoral system's relatively low barriers to entry did not produce the complex patterns of fragmentation, re-alignment and re-fragmentation characteristic of the Polish right in the period.

Secondly, a single electoral system may co-exist with varying patterns of party organisational success in the same country. In the Polish case, for example, the explanatory power of an electoral system-based approach is undermined by the differences between the communist successor left and the centre-right in the 1990s. While both have had to operate with the same set of institutional incentives the former was, until recently at least, able to develop relative organisational coherence and consolidation compared with the latter.

Thirdly, given that it is political and party forming elites that are themselves responsible for drafting electoral laws, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish cause from effect, as relevant laws may have simply *reflected* existing divisions among established parties and political groupings rather than *created* or shaped them significantly. For example, Solidarity Electoral Action's support for a 2001 amendment to the Polish electoral law favouring medium-sized groupings reflected its declining electoral support but also accelerated that decline by making 'exit' options more attractive to some of its constituent members (Birch et al 2002: 41-5). Electoral systems thus appear largely to have *re-inforced* existing patterns of right-wing and centre-right party formation in the cases under review, rather than fundamentally

shaped them. For example, although it did not prevent Polish-style fragmentation of the Hungarian right in the mid-1990s, Hungary's electoral system proved largely supportive of the tendency towards party system bi-polarization which was driven by Fidesz's strategy of turning itself into the core of an anti-left alliance, and the related decline of liberalism as a third force in Hungarian politics.

Fourthly, electoral system effects crucially depend on parties (and their voters) correctly reading and rationally responding to the incentives facing them. In this respect, Hungarian and Czech centre-right parties seem to have had more accurate expectations of their respective electoral systems' likely effects, in part reflecting the changeability of the electoral law and party strengths in Polish politics. Strategic errors such as the decision of Solidarity Electoral Action prior to Poland's 2001 election to register as a coalition, not a party, thereby raising its own electoral threshold from 5% to 8%, were not committed by the principal centre-right groupings in Hungary or the Czech Republic.

3.1.2 Semi-presidentialism

Another influential set of macro-institutional explanations of party development centre on the proposition that a parliamentary regime is more likely to produce strong parties, in this case a cohesive centre-right bloc, than a presidential or semi-presidential system. For example, in a paired comparison of the Czech Republic and Poland, Saxonberg argues that the presence of a well-institutionalised party on the Czech centre-right derived, in part, from an indirectly elected presidency and concomitant absence of incentives for charismatic leaders to pursue alternatives to party formation (Saxonberg 2003: 2-36). In contrast, Poland's relatively fragmented centre-right was the result of the incentives facing that country's head of state.

Specifically, Saxonberg suggests that the relatively powerful, directly elected presidency in Poland led a charismatic leader like Lech Wałęsa to avoid founding or consistently supporting a party. Unlike communist successor parties, Saxonberg argues, centre-right parties were typically 'new' formations struggling for stabilisation, making them particularly susceptible to these effects.

At an aggregate level, there is evidence co-relating weak party structures in new democracies with moderate and strong presidentialism (Shugart 1998). Empirically, in terms of the CEE case studies examined in this paper, there is a better 'fit' than for explanations based on electoral system characteristics. Clearly, Poland's semi-presidential system did provide some incentives to Wałęsa to avoid a party-building strategy. Moreover, both the more successful Czech and Hungarian cases combined weak, indirectly-elected presidencies with relatively cohesive, consolidated centre-right formations. However, detailed analysis of the Czech, Hungarian and Polish cases suggests that such institutional effects may in fact be more apparent than real.

Firstly, as with the choice of electoral system, a strong parliamentary regime can be regarded as much (if not more) an *effect* of strong political parties as a *cause*, and it is difficult to separate these two processes out analytically. For example, in the Czech case, given that the Constitution was agreed by the major political parties in December 1992, the weak Czech presidency was clearly the product of strong parties, not vice versa.

Secondly, post-communist elites did not always appear to behave rationally in relation to institutions. For example, Saxonberg is undoubtedly correct to argue that, in both Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, strong parliamentarism and a weak presidency elected by parliament made party-building the only realistic route to

executive power for ambitious politicians. However, the implicit assumption that all charismatic leaders were ambitious politicians capable of ‘rationally’ reading and responding to institutional incentives is flawed. For example, Havel was the dominant political personality in the Czech Lands, having acquired an almost mythic status as a symbol of regime change. If he was responding ‘rationally’ to institutional incentives then Havel should have become engaged in party politics. However, upon becoming a presidential candidate in December 1989, Havel’s distaste for formal (and especially party) political organisation led him to avoid active involvement with the Civic Forum movement he had co-founded, even after he came to accept that its transformation into a more conventional party-like grouping was necessary and unavoidable (Hanley 2007: 66-90). This suggests that the cognitive frameworks through which new political elites approach post-transition politics can be a critical intervening variable in explaining (un)successful party development.

3.2 Historical-structural explanations

3.2.1 Communist regime legacies

Comparative frameworks stressing the role of historical-structural factors and regime legacies offer considerable insight into why initial patterns of party competition, right-wing politics and left-right divisions varied across post-communist CEE. Kitschelt (1995, 2002) and his co-authors (1999), for example, argue that the partial nature of social modernisation in pre-communist Hungary and Poland and the coercive nature of subsequent communist modernization in the two states led to the conservation of populist, ruralist and conservative traditions as anti-communist counter ideologies, forming a cultural reservoir for the reconstitution of the right after 1989. This maintained the historical division between national-populists and liberals committed

to free markets and lifestyle pluralism. Lack of social support for communism in such semi-modern societies, Kitschelt et al argued, created weak 'national-accommodationist' ruling parties, whose successors initiated and embraced economic reform after 1989, further blurring the socio-economic dimension of left-right competition. By contrast, the pro-market, liberal-conservative character of the centre-right in the Czech Republic was said to reflect the social modernity of the Czech Lands before communism, which marginalized traditional sectors but produced an 'bureaucratic-authoritarian' communist regime averse to market reform, and a hard-left communist successor party. Subsequent left-right competition, therefore, centred on marketisation and related distributional issues.

However, such historical-structural analysis has surprisingly little purchase in explaining which blocs will emerge as strong, stable actors in national party systems. Hungary and Poland had similar levels of historical modernisation, similar 'national accommodationist' communist regimes, similarly negotiated exits from communism and similar divisions between Christian-nationalist and secular voters and a marked urban-rural political division after 1989. Both saw the re-emergence of reformed communist successor parties as strong, credible competitors that regained office in the mid-1990s as a result of their successful transformation by reformist elites which had developed in the upper echelons of relatively permissive communist regimes (Grzymała-Busse 2002). Despite these structural similarities and the similar national-conservative ideology of the right in Hungary and Poland, after a decade and a half of party competition, its political success in the two countries could hardly be more contrasting. Indeed, as discussed above, the success of the Hungarian centre-right seems more closely to parallel that in the Czech Republic, whose historical pathway through communism to competitive politics after 1989 was wholly different.

3.2.2 Path dependency and critical junctures

Notions of ‘path dependence’ appear to offer a solution to some of the limitations of legacy approaches, which overlook the autonomy of political dynamics and the speed with which they can erode legacy-determined patterns of initial competition. Theorists of path dependence argue that many durable, established political patterns across national cases are ‘locked in’ by actors’ choices at key formative moments of uncertainty or ‘critical junctures’ (North 1990, Collier and Collier 1991, Mahoney 2000 and Pierson 2004). The formation of parties and party systems in new democracies, and thus the greater stability and success of some centre-right formations in CEE, can be viewed as such a path dependent process (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Thelen 1999, Pierson 2004).

In her work on communist successor parties, Grzymała-Busse, for example, adapts the structural-historical regime legacies framework of Kitschelt and his collaborators, arguing that organisational and programmatic *choices* made by reform-minded elites in communist successor parties during the critical juncture following the transition from communism of 1989-91 played a decisive role in determining their future development.⁷

A similar framework of path dependency and post-transition critical junctures could be constructed to explain diversity and varying success on the CEE centre-right. Moderate centre-right parties in CEE are, after all, typically the ‘successor parties’ of opposition movements, rather than tabula rasa creations. In Poland, almost all centre-right groupings of the 1990s were descendants of the Solidarity movement, the most successful of them (Solidarity Electoral Action) quite explicitly so (Wenzel 1998). The Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic developed on the basis of the

right-wing majority within the Civic Forum movement that led the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Both of Hungary's broad centre-right formations of the 1990s, the Hungarian Democratic Forum and Fidesz, emerged from opposition groupings formed in the late 1980s.

However, our three cases suggest that there were not one, but two post-transitional critical junctures for successful development. The first of these was, as with the communist successor parties, the uncertain political aftermath in 1989-91 of the transition from communism proper, when broad civic and political movements formed during the late communist period and the transition from communism - such as Solidarity in Poland, Civic Forum in the Czech Republic and the Hungarian Democratic Forum - fragmented. In Poland and Hungary, a second 'critical juncture' seemed to follow the defeat of the right by reformed communist successor parties in 1993 and 1994. In both Hungary and Poland this fluid period of realignment saw right-wing political entrepreneurs create successful new electoral alliances. In Hungary, under Orbán's leadership from 1994-5 Fidesz moved in an increasingly conservative-nationalist direction and become the kernel of a unified Hungarian right, absorbing less successful Christian and agrarian groupings while simultaneously garnering most of their electorates. In Poland, re-alignment finally produced the Solidarity Election Action alliance sponsored by the Solidarity trade union, which won elections and gained office in 1997 but fragmented subsequently. As **Figure 1** shows, this sequence of apparent critical junctures across the three cases between 1990 and 2006 can be represented in the branching pattern characteristic of path dependent development.

Figure 1 about here

However, there are reasons to regard explanatory frameworks for centre-right party success based on path dependency and critical junctures with caution. The concept of the ‘critical election’ is well established in the parties and elections literature on Britain and the US (Key 1955; Burnham 1970; Evans and Norris 1999). However, the extension to contemporary CEE as a supposed form of critical juncture is problematic on both empirical and theoretical grounds. First, the notion of periods of ‘locked in’ development punctuated and re-directed by critical junctures is clumsy as a solution to the problem of structure and agency (Mahoney and Snyder 1999, Thelen 1999). The outcome of the critical junctures on the path of party development can be seen as partly conditioned by the character of the outgoing communist regime. Thus in our cases, the more liberal Hungarian communist regime, for example, allowed opposition groupings to take the form of ideologically distinct ‘proto-parties’ and milieu, favouring the formation of elite-led groupings like the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Conversely, the repressive ‘bureaucratic authoritarian’ regime in Czechoslovakia inhibited the organisation of opposition groupings and their differentiation on ideological lines. This led to the creation of a single, rapidly mobilised over-arching civic movement in the Czech lands, Civic Forum, in 1989, which proved a viable basis for the emergence of a more unified party with a shared programme of liberal transformation.⁸

Second, many analyses using the concepts of path dependence and critical junctures, including work on party development (Panebianco 1988, Grzymała-Busse 2002), have conceptual shortcomings, often failing to specify the unit of analysis, the time horizons of junctures and their outcomes; the *mechanisms* by which outcomes are ‘locked in’ and whether a logic of “increasing returns” is essential for such ‘lock-in’

to occur (Pierson 2004, Greener 2005; Capoccia and Keleman 2007). Recent work such as Mair's (1997: 1-16) exploration of Lipset and Rokkan's account of the 'freezing' of West European party systems does enable us to identify a range of potential 'lock-in' mechanisms such as the monopolisation of pre-existing human and material resources by established parties; organisational strategies encapsulating key constituencies and/or offering them selective benefits; and discourse strategies shaping understandings of political competition. At the societal level, additional 'lock-in' mechanisms include the development of partisan identification among voters and members and the development of self-fulfilling rational 'adaptive expectations' that supporting a new party with little prospect of immediate success would represent wasted effort.

However, as the literature on parties in post-communist CEE has established (Van Biezen 2003), such mechanisms appear absent, failing or intermittent in the region. Mass organisation in post-communist Europe has, with a few exceptions, proved costly and ineffective; social constituencies in the region are often ill defined; and partisan identification has been weak and slow to develop in societies with limited civic engagement and high levels of cynicism about parties, politicians and politics. State funding, which is an increasingly dominant source of party resources, sustains a party only so long as it enjoys (and usually in proportion to its) electoral success, and offers immediate resources to political newcomers. Although these factors also partially serve as a barrier to new party formation, they raise doubts as to the extent to which outcomes, such as relative success or failure, might have been 'locked in' in the aftermath of supposed critical junctures.

Any notion that centre-right party success in the cases under review was 'locked in' through a critical juncture process would, therefore, seem misplaced. Our cases

suggest that the ‘lock in’ of party success is confined to the fact that start-up costs make it difficult for challenger parties to emerge while existing formations control the bulk of available resources and attract (limited) partisan identification. Party success in these cases may thus be a relatively brittle phenomenon requiring sustained, active maintenance on the part of party elites. Simply put, it is wrong to label any election bringing significant but temporary change to a party system a ‘critical juncture’

4. Other explanations of CEE centre-right success

4.1 Elite cohesion and successful party formation

Many studies have noted party elites’ importance as powerful autonomous actors shaping party formation in post-communist CEE (Szczurbiak 2001; van Biezen 2003). Others have seen them more as bearers of resources generated during the communist period. Grzymała-Busse (2002), for example, argues that variation in the communist successor parties’ political appeals is explained by the contrasting ‘usable pasts’ which successor party elites brought to post-1989 politics, by which she means both accumulated legitimacy and specific ‘portable skills’.

Our work on centre-right parties suggests that other forms of elite endowment can matter more. In our cases, we find no clear variation in either the degree of elite or parliamentary domination during party formation. In its original incarnation Fidesz was formed ‘externally’ on the basis of a small-scale student protest movement of the late 1980s, but transformed into a powerful conservative-nationalist formation in the mid-1990s through the top-down initiatives of party and parliamentary elites. The Czech Civic Democratic Party was formed by parliamentary and governmental elites *and* forces within the grassroots of Civic Forum. Most Polish centre-right parties drew on the political and (to a varying extent) organizational legacy of the Solidarity labour

and civic movement of the 1980s, and were the creation of both parliamentary and non-parliamentary (trade union) elites.

We also do not find significant differences in the skills or ‘usable pasts’ of party-founding elites capable of explaining the variation we detect. For mass publics after 1989 in all three cases right-wing party-founding elites were credible opponents of the old regime or ‘new faces’ untainted by collaboration with it. However, the ex-dissidents, economic technocrats, working class and student activists who founded centre-right parties had a variegated mix of skills and resources, ranging from grassroots organisational know-how, to negotiation skills and knowledge of liberal economics. Moreover, in the two successful cases, Hungary and the Czech Republic, there was no common set of skills, nor is it possible to see right-wing party-forming elites in one case as significantly more skilled than in the other. The Polish right of the period presents a still greater conundrum. In terms of size, credibility (‘usable pasts’) and portfolio of political skills, Polish counter-elites should have easily outperformed their Hungarian and Czech counterparts in creating a successful broad centre-right party.

In our view, another set of elite endowments offers a better tool for explaining the varying fortunes of the CEE centre-right groupings compared: *elite cohesion and socio-political positioning*. By elite cohesion we understand the ability of an elite group over time to reach and maintain consensus over key strategic and policy issues. Such cohesion is usually underpinned by networks based on both formal membership of parties, governments or bureaucracies and informal ties forged through common life experiences, friendship and professional networks, and shared cultural values (Farzmand 2002: 325-7, Bennich-Björkman 2006).

Variations in elite cohesion appear to distinguish cases of successful centre-right party formation from the one case (Poland) where no durable, broad centre-right party emerged. In Hungary, Fidesz was founded as an independent youth organization, the party acronym standing for Federation of Young Democrats. Defining itself as a 'generational party', membership was initially restricted to those under 35 and, unsurprisingly, the leadership group was highly uniform in its socio-demographic characteristics and life experiences. Of the ten 1995-2001 party presidium members, all were men born within seven years of each other (1959-1965); seven had grown up in the provinces; six had been members of one of the live-in 'disciplinary colleges' of Budapest's two elite universities (Fowler 2004). This naturally did not preclude disagreements and splits. However, once Fidesz leader Orbán and his supporters had established their supremacy in 1993, this shared history eased internal decision-making and provided a powerful sense of group identity, institutional ownership and loyalty. This both enabled them to act as a nucleus for other right-wing elites to coalesce around, and facilitated Fidesz's long march across the Hungarian ideological spectrum and two radical (and contrary) organisational transformations, from movement party to electoral party and back again (Kiss 2003).

The Czech Civic Democrats were also founded by a cohesive, socially and generationally defined elite which emerged during late communism: a group of neo-liberal economists, who emerged during 1970s and 1980s as part of a so-called 'grey zone' of critically minded technocrats in official research and financial institutions. Figures from this group not only acted as a conduit for neo-liberal ideas and policies but also became the dominant elite group around which the Civic Democratic Party coalesced in 1990-1 (Hadjiisky 2001). However, consistent with the Civic Democrats' more limited success in building a broad, inclusive centre-right formation, this elite's

cohesion proved more limited than that of Orbán and his associates. By 1996-7, differences between Klaus and his most prominent associates over policy and strategy had led to a breakdown in trust and elite solidarity, triggering profound political splits in 1997-8 linked to the exposure of illegal party financing practices and corruption in the privatization process. Thereafter, the 'grey zone' economists left the party or retired from front-line politics, leaving the party leadership dominated by politicians with backgrounds in regional politics and by Klaus and his coterie of advisors.

However, elite cohesion is, in itself, only a partial explanation, which - like Grzymała-Busse's concepts of 'portable skills' and 'usable pasts' - in isolation could be seen simply as a by-product of different patterns of state-society relations under communism. Both Hungarian and Czech successful centre-right party-forming elites additionally had in common that they were *positioned as credible second-rank challenger elites* to the opposition elites who initially assumed power after 1989 when the unity of broad opposition groupings broke down in the early 1990s. Fidesz had been represented at both the Opposition Roundtable and the Hungarian roundtable talks proper in 1989 and established itself as a distinct but relatively minor parliamentary party in 1990. Despite electoral losses, it re-entered parliament in 1994, when much of the once dominant Hungarian Democratic Forum was fragmented and in disarray, with party leader Antall now dead (Tókes 1996, Kiss 2003). In the Czech Republic neo-liberal economists gained political office in the Civic Forum-led governments of 1989-90 and 1990-2, but despite Klaus's prominence as Czechoslovak Finance Minister, had limited policy influence and remained distant from the ex-dissident leaders of Civic Forum whose social-liberal inclinations and informal style they distrusted. They were thus well placed to lead a right-wing challenge to this leadership group in 1990-1, uniting free marketeers, grassroots anti-

communist and disgruntled local Forum officials and politicians. Both the Fidesz and Klaus groups thus benefited from the credibility and resources offered by positions in government or parliament they had gained as part of the anti-communist ‘democratic camp’ of 1989. Both were, however, sufficiently peripheral that during fluid periods of realignment they were able to project themselves as outsiders with close links to the provinces and the grassroots capable of bringing new policies and a new professionalism to transition politics.

The size and scope of the elites mobilized by the Polish opposition before 1989, especially during the heyday of the Solidarity movement in 1980-1, meant that centre-right party-forming elites in Poland were heterogeneous and fragmented, not only ideologically, but also in geographical, generational and professional terms (Friszke 1990). Thus even a distinct group such as Polish (neo-)liberal intellectuals, who shared a common ideology marking them out from Catholic nationalists or working-class trade union activists, were fragmented into sub-groups based around different localities, leading personalities and agendas (Szacki 1995). Equivalent Hungarian and Czech elites were numerically, geographically and ideologically more compact. In contrast to the cases of Fidesz and the Czech Civic Democrats, no dominant cohesive founding elite emerged as the core of the centre-right in Poland. Those broad electoral coalitions that did form and briefly seemed capable of durably uniting the diverse elements of the right, such as the bloc supporting Wałęsa’s 1990 presidential bid or Solidarity Electoral Action, floundered because they were in essence also *elite* coalitions with no dominant cohesive core elite.

4.2 Ideological crafting

A further important (but neglected) element in determining the emergence of inclusive, stable centre-right party formations across the region is, we believe, the crafting of durable political ideologies for the post-communist right. Ideology plays a crucial role in framing political action, giving cohesion and identity to political organisations and socializing incoming elites. In the context of CEE centre-right party development, this entailed formulating an integrative ideological narrative that could unite older ‘historic’ discourses of conservatism, nationalism and populism; anti-communism; and ideas imported from Western contexts or developed locally in the context of post-communist social and economic transformation. In the short term, it is true, a charismatic leader can hold together a diverse and heterogeneous formation, acting as a substitute for ideology or a common narrative. The charismatic leadership of Orbán and Klaus clearly was important in the early stages of centre-right party development in Hungary and the Czech Republic; and the lack of it a key weakness in the case of sustaining Solidarity Electoral Action. However, in the absence of elite cohesion and ideological integration, charismatic leadership provides only a short-term breathing space for emergent centre-right groupings to develop an integrative ideological narrative that can provide a sustainable basis to develop a broad and durable political formation. Politicians in early post-communist politics could, therefore, be seen not only as political entrepreneurs, but also as ideological entrepreneurs.

In the Czech context, a key element of the Civic Democratic Party’s success lay in its leaders’ ability to frame a new ideological discourse of ‘rightness’ which imported Anglo-American New Right ideas, grounded them in a Czech post-communist context and related them to the delivery of a programme of post-communist socio-economic

transformation. The exhaustion of the original ideological ‘project’, with the waning of the big issues associated with post-communist transformation, and the fracturing of the neo-liberal elite that formed the core of its ‘dominant coalition’ (Panebianco 1988) after the Civic Democrats lost office in 1997, may have prevented them from achieving the kind of hegemony on the centre-right enjoyed by Fidesz in Hungary. Nonetheless, the ‘project’ provided a unifying narrative during the party’s key formative period and gave it enough early organisational coherence to both prevent significant fragmentation following electoral defeat and engage in subsequent ideological renewal.

In contrast to the Czech centre-right, Hungary’s Fidesz came to reject neo-liberal economics, which it saw as serving the interests of Hungary’s ex-nomenklatura elite and its foreign sponsors. However, Fidesz’s success and cohesion at both mass-electoral and elite-intellectual levels too appeared partly rooted in its leaders’ ability to construct a new integrative ideological narrative, in this case one that converted the potential of the ‘national’ and socio-culturally-based right into an ideology of national transformation with wide popular and electoral resonance in the circumstances of the late 1990s. After turning away from liberalism, Fidesz under Orbán developed a new ideology whose key concepts are normally translated as the ‘civic’ (‘polgári’) and the ‘citizen’ (‘polgár’), although ‘bourgeois’ is a legitimate and in some respects more helpful rendering. The polgári ideology located Hungary’s post-1994 Socialist-liberal administration in a sweeping critique of ‘transition’ integrated into a longer historical narrative of Hungarian nationhood. However, it also offered a vision of post-communist transformation, making it a more aspirational, Western and forward-looking appeal than many traditional forms of Hungarian conservatism.

The ideological development of Solidarity Electoral Action (or rather lack of it) offers a contrasting picture to both the Czech and Hungarian cases. From the outset Solidarity Electoral Action was a heterogeneous political construct espousing an eclectic mix of ideologies encompassing socially conservative trade union-oriented corporatism, Christian Democracy, both economically interventionist and liberal forms of Catholic nationalism, and less overtly Church-inspired strands of liberal-conservatism. However, Solidarity Election Action and its associated intellectual milieu failed in the task of developing a coherent and inclusive ideological narrative that could provide the grouping with programmatic and ideological cohesion beyond a single election. Indeed, unlike Klaus in the Czech Republic and Orbán in Hungary, relevant Polish elites made little effort to formulate a unifying ideology to accompany their organizational and electoral project. The only unifying narrative that held Solidarity Electoral Action together was a shared nostalgic anti-communism and a desire to defeat the communist successor Democratic Left Alliance electorally. The contrast with Hungarian and Czech developments is particularly striking here, given that both Fidesz and the Civic Democrats were responding to phenomena identified as specifically post-communist, in the Hungarian case seeking to redefine the whole nature of Hungary's 'transition', rather than simply harking back to the anti-communist struggle.

This argument also seems broadly confirmed taking into account more recent developments in Poland where both large newer centre-right parties, Civic Platform and Law and Justice, have developed more complex ideological narratives centring on the nature of post-communist transformation. PiS has developed a more powerful, coherent conservative-national project of moral and political renewal based on a vision the creation of a 'Fourth Republic'. Like Fidesz, the party sees itself as

fighting to break the power of a corrupt ‘establishment’ (*układ*) of post-communist business and political networks and liberal elites and use the state to ensure social solidarity. Civic Platform, by contrast, has espoused a modernizing form of pro-market right-wing liberalism incorporating a moderate form of social conservatism, which has some parallel with the ideological narratives of the Czech Civic Democrats. More recently, however, it seems self-consciously to have functioned more as a ‘catch-all’ party of opposition to conservative nationalism, downplaying its economic liberalism to ‘borrow’ many potential centre-left voters prepared to vote for it as the most effective way of removing the conservative Law and Justice-led government (Szczzerbiak 2005, 2007).

5. Conclusions

In this paper we have considered why some centre-right party formations in CEE have been consistently more successful than others during the decade-and-a-half of competitive electoral politics that followed the fall of communism. We defined a ‘successful’ centre-right party formation as one which comprised an inclusive electoral entity encompassing a socially and ideologically broad range of voters and sub-groups; and remained stable and cohesive over time. Having operationalized this dependent variable through a range of measures we ranked Hungary first (high breadth, medium durability), the Czech Republic (medium breadth, high durability) as the second most successful case, and Poland (low breadth and durability) as the least successful. We found that both macro-institutional explanations, focusing on executive structures and electoral systems, and historical-structural explanations stressing communist regime legacies had limited power to explain the observed

variance. The introduction of a more sophisticated framework of path dependence, stressing the role of choices and political crafting at critical junctures, seemed to offer a plausible resolution. However, the lack of strong ‘lock-in’ mechanisms required by such approaches makes such a model unconvincing when applied to CEE centre-right party development.

Given these shortcomings, we looked for supplementary and complementary explanations capable of accounting more fully for the variation in centre-right party success across the three cases. Our analysis identified two such possible factors: (a) the presence of cohesive and credible right-wing elites peripheral to the initial group of ex-opposition elites who first took power after 1989; and (b) the subsequent ability of such elites to (re-)fashion broad integrative ideological narratives relating post-communist transformation to earlier conservative, nationalist and anti-communist traditions.. It suggests in particular that research on party development in relatively open, competitive and ideologically-based CEE party systems should be more aware of the role of informal elite networks in party formation and stabilization, and that ideology and ideational factors may need to be incorporated more seriously and systematically into the study of party success in the region. Although we recognise that our study tests variables against a limited number of cases, we believe, it offers building blocks for a more integrated model of (centre-right) party success in the region and note its recent, broadly successful application to the case of Romanian centre-right and centre-right developments elsewhere in South East Europe (Maxfield 2006; Učeň 2006).

Recent developments in Poland raise some intriguing issues for our analysis. Without invalidating our insights about the importance of ‘concentration’ and co-ordination for parties of the centre-right, the possibility that the Polish party system might settle

into a pattern of bi-polar competition between liberal-conservative and conservative-national bloc with the social democratic centre-left relegated to the status of a marginal third force, calls into question assumptions that left-right divisions - reflecting West European models and/or the old regime-opposition divide - will durably structure CEE party competition. At the same time, we think it equally possible that the collapse of the once stable Polish centre-left - could prove a relatively temporary phenomenon and that, as in Slovakia (Haughton and Rybař 2008 forthcoming), the decline of the communist successor left may give rise to a renewed form of post-communist social democratic politics. Although the separate issue of the break-up and recomposition of CEE centre-left blocs is beyond the scope of this paper, we believe that our work will also prove useful for scholars re-examining this area in the more fluid, less legacy-bound conditions that seem to be emerging in the region.

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Table 1: Centre-right breadth/inclusivity and cohesiveness/durability in post-communist Hungary

		1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
Votes	Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	24.73 %	11.74 %	2.80%	- **	5.04%
	Fidesz	*	7.02 %	29.48 %	41.07 %**	42.03%
	Total right vote (centre-right + extreme right)	42.92 % (i)	36.20% (ii)	54.55% (iii)	45.44% (iv)	49.27% (v)
Seats	Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	164	38	17	24	11
	Fidesz	*	20	148	164	164
	Total seats won by right	229 (vi)	106 (vii)	227 (viii)	188** (ix)	175 (x)
Measures of breadth/inclusivity	largest centre-right party's share of the total vote for the right	0.58	0.32	0.54	0.90	0.85
	Centre-right aggregation index	19.3	6.4	9.0	45.0	21.01
	Proportion of seats won by right held by the largest centre-right party	0.72	0.36	0.65	0.87	0.94
	Fractionalization of the right	0.48	0.87	0.58	0.24	0.12

* Fidesz not classified as a centre-right party until 1994. See text

** There was a joint Fidesz-MDF list in 2002 although they remained two parties. The parties negotiated the placing and positioning of candidates on the joint lists.

- (i) Votes cast for Hungarian Democratic Forum (24.73%), Independent Smallholders Party (11.73%), Christian Democratic People's Party (6.46%).
- (ii) Votes cast for Hungarian Democratic Forum (11.74%), Independent Smallholders Party (8.82%), Christian Democratic People's Party (7.03%), Fidesz (7.02%), Party of Hungarian Justice and Life (1.59%)
- (iii) Votes cast for Fidesz (29.48%), Independent Smallholders Party (13.15%), Hungarian Justice and Life (5.47%), Hungarian Democratic Forum (2.80%), Christian Democratic People's Party (2.31%), Hungarian Democratic People's Party (1.34%)
- (iv) Votes cast for Fidesz-MDF joint list (41.07%), Hungarian Justice and Life (4.37%)
- (v) Votes cast for Fidesz (42.03%), Hungarian Democratic Forum (5.04%) and Hungarian Justice and Life (2.2%)
- (vi) Seats won by Hungarian Democratic Forum (164), Independent Smallholders Party (44), Christian Democratic People's Party (21)
- (vii) Seats won by Hungarian Democratic Forum (38), Independent Smallholders Party (26), Christian Democratic People's Party (22), Fidesz (20). Hungarian Justice and Life (0)

- (viii) Seats won by Fidesz (148), Independent Smallholders Party (48), Hungarian Democratic Forum (17), Hungarian Justice and Life (14), Christian Democratic People's Party (0), Hungarian Democratic People's Party (0)
- (ix) Seats won by Fidesz-MDF joint list (188) Hungarian Justice and Life (0)
- (x) Seats won by Fidesz (164), Hungarian Democratic Forum (11) and Hungarian Justice and Life (0)

Table 2: Centre-right breadth/inclusivity and cohesiveness/durability in the post-communist Czech Republic

		1992*	1996	1998	2002	2006
Votes	Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	29.73%	29.62 %	27.74%	24.47%	35.38%
	Total right vote (centre-right + extreme right)	50.41% (i)	54.87% (ii)	50.69% (iii)	39.01% (iv)	44.81% (v)
Seats	Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	76	68	63	58	81
	Total seats won by right	119 (vi)	117 (vii)	102 (viii)	89 (ix)	94** (x)
Measures of breadth/inclusivity	Largest centre-right party's share of the total vote for the right	0.59	0.54	0.55	0.63	0.79
	Centre-right aggregation index	11.8	10.8	11.00	31.5	47.0
	Proportion of seats won by right held by the largest centre-right party	0.64	0.58	0.62	0.65	0.86
	Fractionalization of the centre-right	0.59	0.66	0.62	0.58	0.26

*Figures for 1992 are for elections to the Czech National Council. In June 1992 elections to the two house of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly also took place in the Czech Republic

** The six deputies elected for the Greens also allied themselves with the right in coalition negotiations, but are not included as right-wing party for the purpose of these calculations. Were the Greens included in the calculation for 2006, there would be a total right-wing vote of 51.1% with ODS taking 69% of right-wing votes and 81% of right wing parliamentary seats. The recalculated Rae fractionalization score for the Czech right would be 0.34.

- (i) Votes cast for: Civic Democratic Party (29.73%), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (6.28%), Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (5.98%), Civic Democratic Alliance (5.93%), Club of Committed Independents (2.69%)
- (ii) Votes cast for: Civic Democratic Party (29.62%), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (8.08%), Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (8.01%); Civic Democratic Alliance (6.36%), Democratic Union (2.8%)
- (iii) Votes cast for: Civic Democratic Party (27.74%), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (9.00%), Freedom Union (8.60%), Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (3.90%), Democratic Union (1.45%)
- (iv) Votes cast for: Civic Democratic Party (24.74%), Coalition of Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party and Freedom Union – Democratic Union (14.27%)
- (v) Votes cast for: Civic Democratic Party 35.38%), Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party and Freedom Union (7.22%), European Democrats – Association of Independent Lists (2.08%), Freedom Union-Democratic Union (0.13%)

- (vi) Seats won by: Civic Democratic Party (76), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (15), Civic Democratic Alliance (14) Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (14)
- (vii) Seats won by: Civic Democratic Party (68), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (18), Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (18), Civic Democratic Alliance (13), Democratic Union (0)
- (viii) Seats won by: Civic Democratic Party (63), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (20), Freedom Union (19), Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (0), Democratic Union (0)
- (ix) Seats won by: Civic Democratic Party (58), Coalition of Christian Democratic Union – Czech People's Party and Freedom Union – Democratic Union (31)
- (x) Seats won by: Civic Democratic Party (81), Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (13), European Democrats – Association of Independent Lists (0), Freedom Union – Democratic Union (0),

Table 3: Centre-right breadth/inclusivity and cohesiveness/durability in post-communist Poland

		1991	1993	1997	2001	2005
Votes	Democratic Union	12.32 %	10.59 %	-	-	-
	Solidarity Electoral Action	-	-	33.83%	-	-
	Civic Platform	-	-	-	12.68%	24.14%
	Law and Justice	-	-	-	9.50%	26.99%
	Total right vote (centre-right + extreme right)	61.01% (i)	49.70% (ii)	56.15% (iii)	38.75% (iv)	64.17% (v)
Seats	Democratic Union	62	74	-	-	-
	Solidarity Electoral Action	-	-	201	-	-
	Civic Platform	-	-	-	65	133
	Law and Justice	-	-	-	44	155
	Total seats won by right	305 (vi)	112 (vii)	267 (viii)	147 (ix)	322 (x)
Measures of breadth/inclusivity	Largest centre-right party's share of the total vote for the right	0.20	0.21	0.60	0.33	0.42
	Centre-right aggregation index	2.0	2.1	12.0	6.6	7.0
	Proportion of seats won by right held by the largest centre-right party	0.20	0.66	0.75	0.44	0.48
	Fractionalization of the centre-right	0.96	0.56	0.44	0.81	0.77

- (i) Votes cast for: the Democratic Union (12.32%), Catholic Electoral Action (8.73%), Civic Centre Agreement (8.71%), Confederation for an Independent Poland (7.50%), Liberal Democratic Congress (7.49%), Peasant Agreement (5.47%), Solidarity trade union (5.05%), Christian Democracy (2.36%), Union of Real Politics (2.26%) and the Party of Christian Democrats (1.12%).
- (ii) Votes cast for: the Democratic Union (10.59%), Fatherland (6.37%), Confederation for an Independent Poland (5.77%), Non-party Bloc for Reforms (5.41%), Solidarity trade union (4.90%), Centre Agreement (4.42%), Liberal Democratic Congress (3.99%), Union of Real Politics (3.18%), Coalition for the Republic (2.70%) and the Peasant Agreement (2.37%).
- (iii) Votes cast for: Solidarity Electoral Action (33.83%), Freedom Union (13.37%), Movement for Poland Reconstruction (5.56%), Union of the Republic Right (2.03%) and the Bloc for Poland (1.36%).

- (iv) Votes cast for: Civic Platform (12.68%), Law and Justice (9.50%), the League of Polish Families (7.87%), Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right (5.60%) and Freedom Union (3.10%).
- (v) Votes cast for: Law and Justice (26.99%), Civic Platform (24.14%), League of Polish Families (7.97%), Democratic Party (2.45%), Janusz Korwin-Mikke Platform (1.57%) and Patriotic Movement (1.05%).
- (vi) Seats won by: the Democratic Union (62), Catholic Electoral Action (49), Civic Centre Agreement (44), Confederation for an Independent Poland (46), Liberal Democratic Congress (37), Peasant Agreement (28), Solidarity trade union (27), Christian Democracy (5), Union of Real Politics (3) and the Party of Christian Democrats (4).
- (vii) Seats won by: the Democratic Union (74), Confederation for an Independent Poland (22), Non-party Bloc for Reforms (16), Fatherland (0), Solidarity trade union (0), Centre Agreement (0), Liberal Democratic Congress (0), Union of Real Politics (0), Coalition for the Republic (0) and the Peasant Agreement (0).
- (viii) Seats won by: Solidarity Electoral Action (201), Freedom Union (60), Movement for Poland Reconstruction (6), Union of the Republic Right (0) and the Bloc for Poland (0).
- (ix) Seats won by: Civic Platform (65), Law and Justice (44), the League of Polish Families (38), Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right (0) and Freedom Union (0).
- (x) Seats won by: Law and Justice (155), Civic Platform (133), League of Polish Families (34), Democratic Party (0), Janusz Korwin-Mikke Platform (0) and Patriotic Movement (0).

NB:

Fractionalization of the right index:

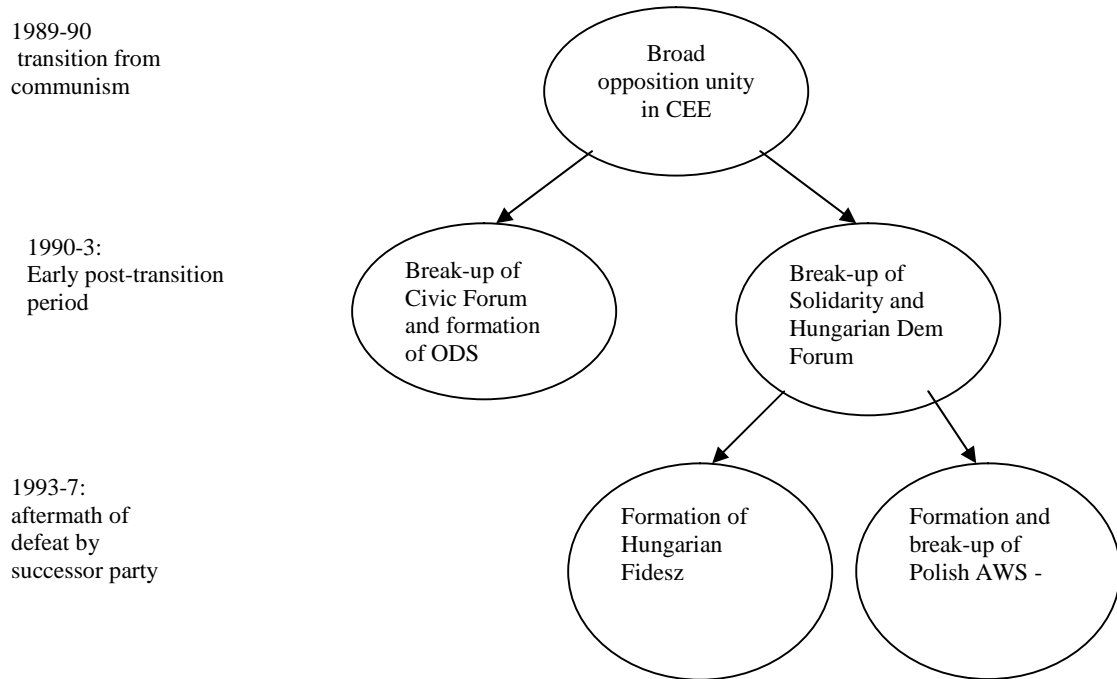
$$F = 1 - \sum p_i^2$$

P_i = proportion of seats held by party i , where i is the largest centre-right party

Aggregation index:

$$\frac{\text{The share of the right-wing vote (\%) won by the largest centre-right party}}{\text{The number of right-wing parties}}$$

Figure 1: Critical junctures in the development of broad centre-right parties in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic



NOTES

* We would like to thank Tim Bale and two anonymous referees for helpful and constructive comments at different stages of this project.

¹ We exclude the Czech and Czechoslovak parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic in June 1990, which were dominated by Civic Forum, an opposition umbrella grouping.

² For states with bi-cameral legislatures, i.e. Poland and the Czech Republic after 1996, we consider elections to the lower house of parliament. For parliamentary elections held in the Czech Republic in June 1992, when it was still a constituent part of Czechoslovakia, we use voting figures for elections to the Czech national parliament, the Czech National Council (CNC). In Hungary, which uses a mixed list- and single-member constituency system, we take the list vote as our measure.

³ Although measures of fractionalization such as the Rae index are usually applied as a measure of party system fragmentation, there is, in principle, no reason why they cannot be applied to a bloc or *tendance* within a national party system. Our use of this measure, naturally, does not capture the cohesion of centre-right formations' parliamentary groups once elected.

⁴ The Christian and Democratic Union is a full member of the EPP; the Civic Democratic Party is a member of the European Democratic Union (EDU) and the European Democrats (ED) sub-grouping that sits with the EPP group in the European Parliament. The Civic Democratic Alliance was an EDU member but following its effective disintegration in 1998 has recently joined the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) grouping.

⁵ Despite a convincing electoral victory, at 58%, Civic Platform's share of the total vote for the right was in fact slightly less than that of Solidarity Electoral Action in

1997 (60%), or the share achieved by the Czech Civic Democrats over the last 15 years and considerably less than Fidesz at the last two Hungarian elections.

⁶In 1989 Hungary's independent proto-parties were (sometime uncomfortably) united in a single negotiating bloc, the so-called Opposition Roundtable, to deal with regime negotiators at the roundtable negotiations proper.

⁷ Like the more macro-level legacy account developed by Kitschelt et al (1999), such analyses focus primarily on explaining patterns of national variation in early post-communist politics and elucidating mechanisms linking past (structural) causes to such initial outcomes. However, although they accept that the determining effect of legacies will ultimately fade there is, once again, an unexplored implication that initial, legacy-shaped outcomes will tend to be durable and thus that those parties initially emerging as strong and successful players will maintain this success. See, for example Grzymała-Busse (2002: 284).

⁸ A parallel movement, Public Against Violence, formed in Slovakia, reflecting the territorial division of the Czechoslovak federation into two national republics.